

important example of this is the work of St. Mary's Regional Medical Center. St. Mary's embodies the remarkable caring of the Sisters, providing preventive, restorative and supportive services with compassion and respect for thousands of Lewiston area residents. Although the Sister's involvement in the management of the hospital has receded in recent years, their legacy lives on in members of the staff who continue to treat to some of Maine's most needy.

There is no way to quantify the immense good that the Sisters of Charity of St. Hyacinthe have brought to the city of Lewiston and to the state of Maine. The impact of their service to the community is a shining example of the power of love and faith. I join the city of Lewiston in expressing an unending gratitude for their kindness and their devotion to helping the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the Sisters of Charity of St. Hyacinthe for their numerous contributions to the Lewiston community and the state of Maine.

#### UNITED STATES-PANAMA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 11, 2011*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3079, the United States-Panama Trade Implementation Act.

With our nation's unemployment rate continuing to hover around 9 percent, it is unconscionable that we are considering NAFTA-clone free trade agreements that will further facilitate the outsourcing of American jobs and undermine the rights of American workers. Proponents of free trade agreements like to purport that they are good for the U.S. economy and will create jobs. But history is on the side of those of us who opposed NAFTA, CAFTA and other damaging trade agreements over the last decade.

Free trade agreements play a significant role in exacerbating the negative effects of globalization, including the rapid privatization of vital public resources. They have resulted in the loss of domestic jobs and manufacturing industries and in significant decreases to labor and environmental standards. In addition, FTAs result in significant job loss and privatization of labor-intensive industries for the countries we enter in trade agreements with. Unionizing in countries like Mexico and Colombia has resulted in death or imprisonment of union leaders.

Every state in this country has been affected negatively by our destructive trade policies. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that nearly 700,000 U.S. jobs have been displaced since the passage of NAFTA in the 1990s. The majority of the jobs displaced—60 percent—were in the manufacturing sector. My home State of Ohio is one of the top ten states with the most jobs displaced by NAFTA, having lost 34,900 jobs. Our rapidly increasing trade deficits with countries like China has resulted in the loss over 5 million jobs over the past decade. Of that 5 million, the State of Ohio has lost 103,000 jobs as a result of the increase in our trade deficit with China.

This is not a debate about being for trade or against trade as some of my colleagues have framed it. This is a debate about learning from the free trade policies we have pursued over the last decade that have proven to be significantly damaging to the American economy and American workers. The numbers speak for themselves.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this agreement.

#### PANAMA IS A TAX HAVEN

Panama is one of the world's worst tax havens, allowing rich U.S. individuals and corporations to skirt their responsibility to pay taxes that are vital to the local communities that depend on those revenues. The U.S.-Panama free trade agreement does nothing to address this issue. At a time when potentially damaging austerity measures are being proposed to balance the budget, we should not be considering a free trade agreement that fails to deal with an issue critical to addressing our deficit.

This FTA includes provisions that even undermine our own laws to combat tax haven activity. Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch reports that the "FTA's Services, Financial Services and Investment Chapters include provisions that forbid limits on transfers of money between the U.S. and Panama. Yet, such limits are the strongest tools that the U.S. has to enforce policies aimed at stopping international tax avoidance."

Many have cited a tax treaty signed by Panama earlier this year as a reason to support the Panama-FTA and dismiss the concerns of Panama as a tax haven. In reality, the agreement (the "Tax Information Exchange Agreement") fails to hold Panama and corporations accountable for tax evasion. The agreement only requires Panama to stop refusing to provide information to U.S. officials in specific cases if U.S. officials know to inquire. It also includes a significant exception which allows Panama to reject requests for information if it is "contrary to the national interest."

By passing this free trade agreement, we are rewarding and condoning corporations who offshore jobs and practice international tax avoidance—practices that significantly hurt American workers and the American economy.

#### BUY AMERICAN PROVISIONS—AND U.S. WORKERS—UNDERMINED

The U.S.-Panama FTA requires the U.S. to waive Buy America requirements for all Panamanian-incorporated firms, and even many Chinese and other foreign firms incorporated in Panama that are there to exploit the tax system. This means that work that should go to U.S. workers can be offshored because of rules which forbid Buy America preferences requiring U.S. employees to perform contract work by a federal agency in the federal procurement process. According to Global Trade Watch, the U.S. would be waiving Buy America requirements for "trillions in U.S. government contracts for any corporations established in Panama and in exchange would get almost no new procurement contract opportunities in Panama for U.S. companies."

If you support the NAFTA tradition of weakening offshore protections, limiting financial service regulations, banning Buy America procurement preferences, limiting environmental, food and product safety safeguards, and the undermining U.S. workers and our economy, than this is your agreement.

#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LA POSADA HOTEL

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 13, 2011*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of La Posada Hotel, a historical treasure and cultural icon of the community of Laredo, Texas.

La Posada Hotel stands on the banks of the Rio Grande and in the heart of Laredo's Historic Business District, a quiet but proud tribute to the Spanish, Mexican and Texan architectural influences that many Texas cities are proud to call their own. The hotel's classic entrance, its windows wrapped in decorative wrought-iron, and Spanish-tile decked veranda draped with the Seven Flags of Texas all face the historic San Agustin Plaza.

The building was established in 1916 and was first the home of old Laredo High School until 1961, when Tom Herring opened the hotel centered on the school building. La Posada is comprised of three additional historic 19th-century buildings: the Tack Room, formerly the Bruni House, the Republic of the Rio Grande Museum and the San Agustin ballroom, formerly a convent. Renowned for its world-class accommodations and high-quality customer service, La Posada is also home to two award-winning restaurants, Zaragoza Grill and The Tack Room. It has undergone a \$17-million renovation that has enabled it to become a premier hotel in Laredo and to continue its role as a contributor to the community's economy.

La Posada has also become the elegant setting of some of Laredo's most acclaimed events, including the George Washington's Birthday Celebration, and host to illustrious figures including U.S. Senators, U.S. Congressmen, and international public officials and diplomats.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the time to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of La Posada Hotel and its historical, cultural and economic significance to the community of Laredo, Texas. I thank you for this time.

#### SECOND U.S. POW DELEGATION TO JAPAN, OCTOBER 15–23, 2011

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 13, 2011*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor veterans from America's greatest generation and thank the Government of Japan for recognizing the sacrifices of these men. On Saturday, October 15, seven former members of the U.S. Army and Army Air Corps, who fought in the Battle for the Philippines at the start of World War II, from December 1941 to May 1942, will travel to Tokyo as guests of the Japanese government. These brave soldiers and airmen were all prisoners of war of Imperial Japan.

The conditions in which they were held are unimaginable. Their first trip to Japan was on aging freighters called "Hellships," where the men were loaded into suffocating holds with little space, water, food, or sanitation. At the